

NOOTKA LUPINE

Lupinus nootkatensis Donn ex

Sims

plant symbol = LUNO

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Flora of Iceland

Alternative Name

blue lupine

Uses

Ethnobotanic: The roots of Nootka lupine were roasted or pit cooked by the Nuxalk and Kwakwaka'wakw (Pojar & Mackinnon 1994). The seeds were used as protein rich vegetable or savory dish in any of the ways that cooked beans are used, they were also roasted or ground into a powder.

Wildlife: Grizzly bears relish the roots of Nootka lupine and make large feeding excavations on north coastal estuarine marshes where both lupines and bears thrive (Pojar & Mackinnon 1994).

Status

Please consult the Plants Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Bean family (Fabaceae). Nootka lupine is a native perennial that dies back annually to a thick rhizome (Pojar & Mackinnon 1994). The leaves are palmately compound and up to six centimeters long. The flowers are blue (sometimes tinged pink or white), pea-like, to two centimeters long; in dense clusters as much as thirty centimeters long (Ibid).

They are hermaphrodite (have both female and male organs) and are pollinated by bees.

Distribution: Known from Alaska in the U.S., but circumboreal. For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Adaptation

Nootka lupine is commonly found in gravel bars, meadows, tidal marshes and open slopes. This plant requires well-drained soil and prefers sandy, loamy and clay soils. It grows best in a sunny position and cannot tolerate shade.

Establishment

Propagation by Seed: Nootka lupine seeds should be pre-soaked for twenty-four hours, to break down the tough seed coats, and then sow in the early spring in a greenhouse. The seedlings should be thinned out as soon as the first true leaf appears (Heuser 1997). Division should be done in the spring, just before new growth commences (Ibid).

Management

Lupines are most valuable because of the masses of nitrogen fixing bacteria, which live in nodules on their roots and convert the free nitrogen of the atmosphere into compounds that are essential to plant and animal growth (Moldenke 1949).

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Not readily available.

References

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